

TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC COMMUNITY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Members:

Professors Susan Crawford, Mary Ann Glendon, Annette Gordon-Reed, Bruce H. Mann (chair), Kristen Stilt, and Guhan Subramanian and alums Pamela Everhart '90 and Danielle Gray '03 and four students (three J.D. students and one Graduate Program student) to be nominated by the Harvard Law School Student Government.

Charge:

The mission of Harvard Law School is to train the best lawyers in the world and to support their leadership and success in private practice and in the public interest. Graduates of the Law School serve in governments throughout the world in elective and appointive office and in staff positions. They administer justice and shape public policy. They influence the world as business entrepreneurs and as academics engaging in research, critical analysis, and advocacy. Essential to our mission is the commitment to knowledge—to deepen understanding of law and legal systems here and throughout world, to advance debate about and work toward the ideals of justice, and to explore how law can promote social welfare.

These are lofty goals, which Harvard Law School is uniquely equipped to attain. The Law School combines unmatched excellence with a large, diverse community in which our differences can make us stronger, can sharpen our knowledge and understanding, and can lead us closer to our best ideals.

To fulfill these high purposes, direct and vigorous inquiry and debate are essential. We succeed in advancing our goals only if all members of our community experience and cultivate the trust and mutual respect that allow for true inquiry and genuine disagreement about the hard questions that it is our purpose to explore, both in class and out. As members of an academic community, we are engaged in a common enterprise even when we disagree. To strengthen our community as well as the success of each individual within it, we have an obligation to create the conditions that allow us to learn from one another and study with and alongside one another. Our differences are and must be our strength. These imperatives must mean that Harvard Law School embraces people of all races, sexes, identities, national origins, social and economic backgrounds, religions, and political perspectives.

As lawyers and lawyers-in-training, we bring facts, reason, and hard work to bear on the problems and challenges we address. To that end, I am creating a Task Force on Academic Community and Student Engagement to examine the following questions:

- **Institutional culture:** How do we foster an environment in which members of the community can have difficult conversations about hard questions freely, openly, and with mutual respect, and ensure the exchange of ideas inside and outside the classroom that is crucial to the study and practice of law?

- **Curriculum:** How well does the range of courses offered at Harvard Law School serve the aspirations of students and prepare students for the changing demands of our profession?
- **Mentoring:** How can we enhance mentoring opportunities for all students at the Law School?
- **Institutional supports:** What institutional supports, policies, and practices will further the goals of cultivating full participation and inclusion in the Law School community and the free exchange of ideas?

In addressing these questions, I am asking the Task Force to engage the entire community. It will solicit the opinions and concerns of members of the Law School community; enlist the counsel and assistance of organizations, departments, and offices within the Law School; and consider the practices of our peer schools. I ask the Task Force to submit its findings to me in March in a written report that I will share with the Law School community.

Martha Minow
Morgan and Helen Chu Dean and Professor of Law